

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL3810 Rosin Court, Suite 150
Sacramento, CA 95834**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****June 5, 2003****Contact: Carl DeWing****PR 03-49****(916) 263-7949****RICHMOND MARKET LOSES LIQUOR LICENSE FOR SELLING PRESCRIPTION DRUGS**

Richmond – The California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) today revoked the liquor license of the La Raza market, 705 23rd Street in Richmond. The revocation was due to the licensees selling prescription drugs without of pharmaceutical license.

The action was taken after representatives from the Contra Costa Department of Environmental Health conducted an inspection of the market in April of 2002. The inspection revealed prescription drugs that were offered for sale without a prescription. The market is not licensed as a retail pharmacy by the State of California.

The pharmaceuticals were apparently smuggled from Mexico, and were sold to the market. The owner said he had been selling prescription drugs for about two years, and was earning about \$700 to \$800 dollars a month.

The formal ABC penalty is revocation of the license, with the revocation stayed for 180 days, with the requirement that the owner transfer the liquor license to a person acceptable to the department. In the meantime, the license is suspended. If the transfer does not take place within the required 180 days, it will be permanently revoked.

Many of the drugs had the potential to cause serious harm or even death if taken incorrectly. Said Contra Costa Department of Environmental Health Inspector Joseph Doser, "People who take prescription drugs without the advice of a doctor, are threatening their health. It is a dangerous practice that can cause more harm than good."

Said ABC's Oakland District Office Administrator Everest Robillard, "A liquor licensee is required to obey the laws of the state. When there is conduct that is contrary to the health and safety of the public, the privilege of owning a liquor license can be suspended or revoked. In this case, the licensee knew, or should have known, the seriousness of selling prescription drugs without a license."

The licensees had two prior violations. The market sold alcohol to minors in 1996 and again in 1999.

ABC is a department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which is under the direction of Secretary Maria Contreras-Sweet, a member of the Governor's Cabinet.